

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 - 10 (Canceled)

11. (Previously presented) A dishwasher comprising:
- at least one washing container for receiving items to be handled, with the items to be handled being subjected to an operative handling cycle including at least one of a washing step and a rinsing step wherein the washing step includes introduction of a cleaning agent and a fluid carrier forming a washing fluid and the rinsing step includes introduction of a rinsing fluid; and
- a system for recognition of the fluid level of the washing fluid contained in the dishwasher, the fluid level recognition system having at least one capacitive filling level sensor having at least two probes, forming two capacitor plates, each operatively coupled to a sensor surface and projecting into the washing container for operative contact with the washing fluid, thereby using the washing fluid as a dielectric having a dielectric constant that changes with the fill level of the washing fluid,
- wherein at a first fill level the probes and the washing fluid form a capacitor having a first capacitance value indicating a first fill level and causing the filling level sensor to sense the first fill level and at a second fill level the probes and the washing fluid form a capacitor having a second capacitance value indicating a second fill level and causing the filling level sensor to sense the second fill level,
- wherein at least one sensor probe made of electrically conducting material is provided inside the washing container and an electromagnetic field can be formed between the sensor probe and the filling level sensor, wherein the electromagnetic

field varies depending on the height of the liquid level or varies depending on the dielectric constant of the medium surrounding the sensor probe, and wherein the at least one sensor probe is arranged such that it is separated with respect to an active sensor surface of the filling level sensor by a wall of the washing container.

12. (Previously Presented) The dishwasher according to claim 11, wherein the filling level sensor is in the form of a capacitor whose electrical capacitance varies depending on the dielectric constant of the medium surrounding the filling level sensor.
13. (Previously Presented) The dishwasher according to claim 11, wherein the filling level sensor reacts to the relative dielectric constant of water.
14. (Previously Presented) The dishwasher according to claim 11, wherein the filling level sensor includes at least two opposite active sensor surfaces at which an electromagnetic field can be formed that varies as a function of the dielectric constant of the medium surrounding the sensor surfaces.
15. (Previously presented) The dishwasher according to claim 11, wherein the filling level sensor is located outside the washing container, the filling level sensor has a selected one of at least one sensor surface and no sensor surfaces, and the filling level sensor and its respective sensor surfaces are isolated from the rinsing liquid by the wall of the washing container.
- 16-17. (Canceled).
18. (Previously presented) The dishwasher according to claim 11, wherein the electrical capacitance of the filling level sensor and its variation is detected using

electrical means by at least one of a detection in a qualitative manner and a detection in a quantitative manner.

19. (Previously Presented) The dishwasher according to claim 11 and further comprising electronic storage means in which at least one reference value can be stored which corresponds to an electrical capacitance of the filling level sensor at a specific fluid level.
20. (Previously Presented) The dishwasher according to claim 11, wherein a certain limiting value of the electrical capacitance of the filling level sensor is specified to discriminate between whether the filling level sensor is located in the proximity of a medium having a high or low dielectric constant or whether the filling level sensor is surrounded by an aqueous fluid or by air.
21. (Previously presented) A dishwasher comprising:
at least one washing container for receiving items to be handled, with the items to be handled being subjected to an operative handling cycle including at least one of a washing step and a rinsing step wherein the washing step includes introduction of a cleaning agent and a fluid carrier forming a washing fluid and the rinsing step includes introduction of a rinsing fluid; and
a system for recognition of a fluid level of the washing fluid contained in the dishwasher, the fluid level recognition system having at least one capacitive filling level sensor having an electrical capacitance that changes as a function of a height of the fluid level,
wherein at least one sensor probe made of electrically conducting material is provided inside the washing container and an electromagnetic field can be formed between the sensor probe and the filling level sensor, wherein the electromagnetic field varies depending on the height of the liquid level or varies depending on a dielectric constant of a medium surrounding the sensor probe, and

wherein the at least one sensor probe is arranged such that it is separated with respect to an active sensor surface of the filling level sensor by a wall of the washing container.

22. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 11, wherein the at least one sensor probe that is provided inside the washing container is disposed on a first side of the wall of the washing container, the first side being exposed to the washing fluid, and
- wherein the active sensor surface of the filling level sensor is located outside the washing container and on a second, opposite side of the wall of the washing container, the second, opposite side being isolated from exposure to the washing fluid by the wall of the washing container.